

**CUMBERLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**The Cumberland School Committee held a workshop on Thursday, December 2, 2010 at the Cumberland High School Library, 2600 Mendon Road, Cumberland, Rhode Island.**

**Agenda Item #1: Convening of Meeting**

**Chairman Mutter convened the meeting at 7:34 p.m.**

**Members Present: Jeffrey Mutter, Lisa Beaulieu, Linda Teel, John Gibbons(arrived at 7:37 p.m.), Daniel Pedro, Erika Sanzi, Earl Wood**

**Staff Present: Donna A. Morelle, Ed., Superintendent, Joseph A. Rotella, Esq., Director of Administration, Dr. Susan Carney, Asst. Superintendent, Lisa Colwell, Director of Special Services, Fred Schockaert, Dep. Director of Special Services**

**Agenda Item #2: Approval of Agenda**

**Mr. Pedro made a motion to approve the agenda, Mrs. Beaulieu 2nd the motion, approved 6-0 (Mr. Gibbons had not arrived yet).**

**The following items were covered at this workshop: Cumberland Public Schools Organizational Chart, Title 16 School Committees and Superintendents: Powers of Duties A)Communications Protocols for**

**Superintendent and School Committee, Selected Charter Provisions: Town of Cumberland, Code of Ethics and Ethics in Government, Chapter 42-46 Open Meetings, Chapter 38-2 Open Records, Discussion of Educational Issues including BEP, Race to the Top, District Strategic Plan, School Improvement Plans:**

**Dr. Morelle began the discussion by thanking everyone for coming – noting that most of the administrative staff was present and she was very happy to see them all. Dr. Morelle thought that the SC would share goals this evening and also thought that she and the SC would talk about how they wanted to communicate with each other – proper procedures. Dr. Morelle stated that she and Mr. Mutter had already had one conversation regarding this, but thought that the entire committee needed to have input. Dr. Morelle asked if any of the members had anything else to add in that they would like to see get covered tonight. She also pointed out that she brought each SC member two discs, one had all of the links associated with their meeting package and one had all of their requests of information – such as – contracts, student handbooks, Keyworks, etc. Mr. Mutter thanked Dr. Morelle and then noted that their previous workshop was to get the SC up to speed and figure out what they needed to do and wanted to make sure that everyone understood that they did not invite administration to the workshop because it was specifically geared toward the SC members – just getting them acclimated – the SC intends to work with administration in every way and together they will determine what the goal of the district is and they will work together to get it done. At this time the introductions of all SC**

members and all administrative staff present took place.

Dr. Morelle reviewed the organizational chart and noted how closely the Superintendent works with the SC – they work together and then the principals, assistant principals, etc. Mr. Mutter said the SC can only be successful if they have a successful Superintendent. Mr. Mutter does not want the SC members to go through him to talk to the Superintendent – he wants them to go directly to Dr. Morelle – if they feel comfortable doing this. He said they will be held accountable for their actions/conversations, if they do in fact go directly to Dr. Morelle. Mr. Mutter likes to empower people – he stated that only if someone is not doing their job will the SC then step in and take the appropriate action/steps. Dr. Morelle thinks it is a good idea to put a face with a name and that was why she wanted the administrative team here tonight. Dr. Morelle reminded the SC that she is between them and the administrative staff – they need to contact her before going to Dr. Carney, Mr. Rotella, a principal, etc.- she did say that if you needed to contact a principal directly, that she needed to be copied on the note/email. Dr. Morelle will be assigning her administrators to the different sub-committee's – she will review where she thinks the best fits will be. The discussion came up about what SC members do when parents contact them with issues. Mr. Mutter said that if they get an email or call they should send or forward an email to the person responsible (i.e. Richard Hilton – if it has to do with Buildings, etc) and always copy Dr. Morelle, or tell the person who to contact, or give the issue to Dr. Morelle and she will follow-up – different issues/scenarios could require different

follow-thru. Mrs. Beaulieu noted that when she receives calls or emails she always asks questions and then usually ends up sending them back to the teacher or principal, then the superintendent – again different issues/scenarios. Dr. Morelle said that there are limitations once you are elected as a SC member – you can only do so much. Mrs. Beaulieu agreed and said that she has had situations come up and there is not much that you can do, you can make suggestions or coach the parent, but you cannot necessarily fix the problem – they will then go to the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent for additional help. Dr. Morelle felt comfortable with requests coming to her and Mr. Mutter said they will do a field test and see how things work out – it is all new to them. Mr. Rotella picked up at this point and noted that his door is always open and wanted members to feel comfortable about discussing anything with him. Mr. Rotella reviewed Title 16 and went over the general powers and duties of the SC and general powers and duties of the Superintendent. The SC has responsibility to set policies, etc., subject to law. The Superintendent puts the budgets together (for the SC to approve), develops plans in all areas including staff (responsible for hiring each employee in the district and then gets the SC approvals), communication, professional development. The SC has the overall responsibility to set policy for the district, also responsible for adhering to federal government rules and regulations, federal mandates, department of education rules and regulations – this is all because we take federal dollars so we need to make sure the district is doing what it needs to do. Mr. Rotella advised the SC members that if they ever have a

question regarding an ethical situation, it is best to send an email to the ethics board for help – you could also come to him, but he will then go to the board – nothing is ever black and white – there are always circumstances – that is why it is best to go to the board initially. Mr. Rotella advised the members not to take any gratuity of greater than \$100.00. Open meetings rules for SC is different than the Town Council – Town Council can amend their agenda – SC cannot – once it is publicized, it cannot be changed. There needs to be a quorum of four members to hold a meeting, the agenda needs to be printed in the newspaper such as Woonsocket Call, Pawtucket Times, etc., the Valley Breeze is not an option. Cindy Chabot can be contacted if SC members need to know deadlines for the newspapers.

Open records – the district is responsible for maintaining all types of public records, medical records, personnel files, salary information, residence, this is all public information. Grievances are exempted from the open meetings law. Minutes have to be kept when you have an executive session and you have to state why you are going into executive session – you cannot take votes in an executive session, if you do take a vote you will need to note it and then report out on it. Mr. Rotella said that he can give you the best advice he knows and if he does not know the answer, he will get it for you. Mr. Rotella advised the SC members not to discuss any SC matters/issues (outside of a regular meeting) when there are four members together, because that would be a quorum for a meeting – if there are two members discussing the issue, that is acceptable. Dr. Morelle noted that as an elected official the SC members need to watch how they

comment on things and what they talk about at outside meetings. Dr. Morelle noted that on one of the discs that she handed to SC members tonight, was information regarding the districts strategic plan – strategic plans anchor people, institutions, look at opportunities, look at resources, set goals – use this document for decision making – achievement matters, equity matters, collaboration matters. Dr. Carney gave an overview of scope and sequence, math initiatives, change and how the teachers are adjusting, what other districts are doing. Mr. Mutter asked about how to handle some of the discomfort that folks are feeling in the district. Dr. Carney answered by saying that sometimes you have to let initiatives roll themselves out, you need to be supportive, let the folks know that we are working with professionals and we will teach accordingly – we will not stand still when people get nervous – we will continue to work in a professional manner. Dr. Morelle thought that the discomfort concern would probably be best addressed if on a sub-committee. Dr. Carney reiterated the fact that everything is being documented and after a year a review will be conducted of what was learned. She also went on to say that most of the teachers want to do the right thing and have the best interest of the students in mind, they want their students to do well. Mr. Pedro made a comment referring to culture in the district and Dr. Carney said that we are in a joint venture together – the community – staff – students – teachers – we all need to work together for the benefit of the children. Mrs. Teel noted that the SC members' role is to advocate to make good decisions based on data put in front of them – trying to build better

**schools. Mr. Mutter noted that one of the action items for the SC is to determine what is the role of the SC with regard to the discomfort in the district? Dr. Morelle noted that NECAP results will be discussed in January – not at next weeks meeting. Dr. Drolet (NCMS Principal) stated that he would be happy to walk through the process and provide feedback on how the scope and sequence was developed for the middle school. One comment from the public –the gentleman stated that he would be very happy if there would be quarterly reporting to the public so that they are made aware of what is going on – this will give the community a level of comfort – he thought it should be on the website or maybe in email form – he mentioned updated links, status updates, where we are going, what is currently going on in various schools.**

**Motion was made by Mr. Mutter to adjourn the meeting, 2nd by all members, meeting was adjourned at 10:20 p.m.**

**Workshop minutes respectfully submitted by Linda A. Jackvony.**